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“The silver is mine and the gold is mine, saith the Lord.”—*Haggai ii: 8.*

Scriptural Habits of Giving

By S. EARL TAYLOR

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”
—*Mal. iii: 10.*

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Scriptural Habits of Giving

S. Earl Taylor

“When John Wesley’s income was thirty pounds, he lived on twenty-eight and gave two; and when his income increased to sixty pounds, and afterwards to one hundred and twenty, he still lived on twenty-eight and gave the remainder.”

Scriptural Habits of Giving

At a time when, the world over, the providential openings for Christian activity are multiplying; when one is constantly being called upon to help multitudinous worthy causes; when even churches, hospitals, colleges and the missionary activities are being hampered for lack of funds, the Christian must instinctively turn to the Bible to find out what is really the scriptural idea of giving.

If it be true that we have in any way become blinded by worldly attractions and claims, if there be a disproportion between what we spend on ourselves and what we devote to God's work, if the terrible unanswered cry for help from the poor of the cities, the neglected regions of the country and from heathendom, may in any degree be traced to our indifference, may God help us as we read these pages to see our sinful shortcoming, and may he give us the power both to will and to do his good pleasure.

Giving Essential To a True Religion

It is clearly taught in both the Old Testament and the New, by direct statement and by inference, that the giving of property is essential to a true religion. While men may endeavor to maintain a semblance of piety unaccompanied by acts of charity, nowhere from Genesis to Revelation do we find a hint that religion unaccompanied by liberal giving is acceptable to God.

The scriptures do not leave us without a profound reason for this relation of giving to true piety. Our Lord himself laid bare the nerve of

the question when he said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Christ teaches that his religion is more than a ritual or a code of morals. It is a life of love; and nothing more directly fosters love, and nothing so clearly proves love, as the giving of gifts.

In a commercial age the actual surrender of one's property to God is one of the best tests of sincerity. Rev. F. B. Meyer in his pamphlet on the stewardship of money says: "One of our commonest experiences is the handling of money, and nothing will sooner show whether our consecration be a reality or a sham, nor will anything serve more quickly to accentuate and enforce the life of consecration, than to spend our money daily beneath the sway of those principles which it is so easy to enunciate and so difficult to practice."

"When a man endorses what he *says*, with his *money*, we believe him. The world says, 'Money talks.'"

In giving, the love of Christ constraineth us, and when we stop the expression of that love in action the love itself soon passes away. Moreover, giving enlarges the soul of the giver. Nothing affects character more than giving. Christ himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Giving "is a perfect antidote for the debilitating and corrupting influence of wealth." "To quicken the grace of liberality is to quicken all the other graces." "If thou wouldest be perfect, go sell all that thou hast, and give."

**Some Old
Testament
Examples**

The first recorded act of worship of the human race was accompanied by the offering of the fruit of the ground and the firstlings of the flock.

The first act of Noah as he came forth from the ark was to build an altar unto the Lord and to offer burnt offerings. "He had but seven cattle

and seven sheep with which to begin the world, yet he hesitated not to sacrifice one of each as soon as he set his foot upon the ground."

The first act of Abraham as he went out by faith, not knowing whither he went, was to erect an altar and to offer thereon sacrifice to God. Wherever he went we find him introducing a form of worship that made constant draft upon his personal property. "His special ratifications of God's covenant were made by sacrifices. His grateful homage to God in view of his victories over his enemies had expression in his rendering a tenth of the spoils to the priesthood of God. His training to acts of self-sacrifice must have been the school in which he reached that sublime act of sacrificing his only son."

The first act of Jacob as he awoke from his wonderful vision at Bethel was to vow the vow, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God, and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

The first marked expression of the revival which took place after the period of decline in the reign of David was the alacrity with which both king and people brought in treasure for the building of the temple, while the king cried, "All things are of Thee!"

One of the first manifest signs of a marked decline of the spiritual life of the children of Israel was the oppression of the poor and the offering of the lame and the blind, until the Lord could say through his prophets, "Ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Ye are cursed with a curse." The curse was accompanied by this invitation "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse,

and prove me now herewith if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing."

Examples From the New Testament The first recorded act of worship under the new dispensation was the offering of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

In the Sermon on the Mount no other one thing is emphasized more frequently than is the duty of giving.

In Matt. 6:1-3, giving is placed at the head of Christian duties, and is enumerated before prayer and fasting.

In Matt. 6:19-21, giving is placed at the beginning of a dissertation on Christian life and motive.

In Matt. 6:24-33, the whole question is developed in a wonderful exhortation, which closes with, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

The first act of the converted Zaccheus was the cheerful giving of a large part of his carefully hoarded wealth.

The first act required of the rich young ruler, if he would be a follower of Christ, was to prove his devotion by selling his goods and giving to the poor.

The first outward act of Christ's first disciples was to leave their ship and nets by the sea (their means of livelihood) that they might follow Christ unfettered by earthly cares.

The first outpouring of the Holy Spirit after the ascension of Christ was characterized by one of the most remarkable examples of Christian beneficence the world has ever seen, for the believers "sold their possessions and goods and parted them as every man had need."

One of the last discourses of Christ sounded the doom of those who, rich or poor, place beneficence outside of religion. "Then shall the King say unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye

cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat."

Covetousness The great bane of the church in the Old Testament and in the New was covetousness. The first sin in the Promised Land was covetousness. "A single Achan with his hidden gold brought defeat to the conquering hosts."

The first sin in the New Testament church had its seat in covetousness. The lie of Ananias was prompted by greed. He tried to deceive the Holy Ghost. This first example in the Christian church of a man, a part of whose possessions was withheld from God's control, will stand as a warning through all ages and an awful reminder of God's hatred to the sin of covetousness.

The most heartless sin in scripture was accompanied by covetousness. Judas betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver.

In the Ten Commandments covetousness is ranked with murder, adultery, theft and false witness, for the Decalogue closes with this stern command, "Thou shalt not covet."

Romans 1:29-31 classes covetousness with the vilest of sins. St Paul tells the Romans that covetousness is one of the sins worthy of death. He charges the Ephesians not to let it be named among them. He tells the Colossians that covetousness is idolatry. In writing to Timothy he warns that the "love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, which some, reaching after, have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows." In Ephesians 5:5 St. Paul says it shuts a man out of the kingdom of heaven. No unclean person, nor whoremonger nor covetousness person shall enter the kingdom of heaven.

**The
Tithe**

In the early dawn of civilization, long before the Levitical law was given to Moses, men gave unto God a tenth. We have no assurance in the scripture than Cain and Abel offered unto God the tenth, but it seems probable that they did, since they offered the fruit of the soil and the firstling of the flock in precise conformity with the latter commandment, "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy unto the Lord, and the tithe of the herd of the flock . . . shall be holy unto the Lord." It is certain that Abraham and Jacob gave the tenth.

It is also of extreme interest to note that the custom of tithing was universally practiced among the heathen nations of antiquity. The Greek, the Scythian, the Hindoo, the ancient Briton, and indeed "every nation of which we have any knowledge, gave a tenth to whatever god they worshiped." Dr. Kennicott in speaking of this universal custom says: "Such a custom must have been derived from some revelation, and the revelation must have been antecedent to the dispersion at Babel." It would seem to be a reasonable supposition that God revealed his will concerning the tithe to Adam, and that from Adam it was handed down to Noah, and from the descendants of Noah it was carried in the dispersion to the ends of the earth. It is a sad commentary on our own times that it can truthfully be said "We do not find in all antiquity a nation devoted to any deity, and withholding the tithe. Such an anomaly of history has been reserved for Christian nations.

Under the Mosaic law the tithing system was fully developed. Not only did the Jews give a tenth, as did Abraham, but other financial obligations were imposed by the law. Rev. Alva Hovey, D. D., LL. D., in a carefully written article makes this conservative statement: "There are strong

reasons for believing that a second tenth was called for in connection with the great religious festival at Jerusalem, and it is certain that considerable property was devoted yearly by the faithful to voluntary offerings. A close scrutiny of the evidence will satisfy every candid mind that devout Hebrews were wont to contribute not less than one and one-half tenths of their income to the cause of religion."

The very chiefest act of worship under the old dispensation was the offering of sacrifice to God. This offering must be without spot, of the first fruit of the land. Some writers go so far as to say that under the Mosaic law one-third of the time was required to consume the offerings, and one-third of the property was spent in the support of the temple worship. This at a time when there were no missions to support, but when the giving of time and property was essential, as now, to keep the heart of man close to God.

Steward-ship The New Testament carries out the spirit of the Old in a larger and more effective manner. The Sabbath of the Old Testament in the New becomes the Lord's Day; the Passover, the sprinkling of the blood of the lamb, becomes the Lord's Supper; the tithe passes over into the New Testament in the fuller form of Christian stewardship.

The Bible is very explicit in its teaching concerning stewardship. Unquestionably, God is the owner. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein." (Ps. 29:1.) "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord." (Hag. 2:8.) "Behold, all souls are mine." (Ezek. 18:4.) God has never renounced his ownership, but has exercised it continually. He gave Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar. To-day he holds the nations in his hands.

Christ clearly taught that man is the steward or trustee. (See Matt., 20:1-8; Luke, 12, 42, 48; Matt., 21:33, 41.) The steward of eastern countries is the high official, standing next to the lord himself. When the lord leaves for a journey the steward is in absolute control of the property of his master. Upon the return of the master he is expected to render a faithful account, returning not only a portion of the increase, but principal and interest as well.

John Wesley in his sermon on the Good Steward says: "No character more exactly agrees with the present state of man than that of steward. Our Lord most frequently represented him as such, and there is a peculiar propriety in the representation. It is only in one particular respect, namely, as he is a sinner, that he is styled a debtor, and when he is styled a servant the appellation is general and indeterminate. But a steward is a servant of a particular kind; such a one as man is in all respects. The appellation is exactly descriptive of his standing in the present world, specifying what kind of service he is to give and what kind of service his divine master expects from him."

The inference is that we are under the same obligation to use every dollar for the glory of God that a bank clerk is to use the money of the bank for the furtherance of its interests. We have as little right to use money for our own convenience or pleasure regardless of its relation to God, as the cashier has to take coin from the cash box. Any looseness or irregularity will come to light in that great day when all accounts are audited. Mal-administration will mean nothing less than disclosure and disgrace. Our Master had no more fierce denunciation than for the unfaithful steward. Matt., 25:41, 42; 1 Cor., 4:1, 2.

A business man in writing of Biblical finance says: "Suppose your business was embarrassed

for the lack of funds due you from one whom you had furnished all the necessary resources by which he had been enabled to make during the last year ten times the amount of your due. If he refused to pay you, and at the same time offered to make you a small gift as charity, what would you say? Would it not be adding insult to injury? What estimate would you put upon such a character?"

The steward is not proprietor; he is not owner; he is simply the trustee of another. We again quote from the sermon of John Wesley: "Although a debtor is obliged to return what he has received, until the time of payment comes he is at liberty to use it as he pleases. It is not so with the steward. He is not at liberty to use what is placed in his hands as *he* pleases, but as his master pleases. He has no right to dispose of anything which is in his hands but according to the will of his lord. He is not proprietor of any of these things, but barely entrusted with them by another, and entrusted on this express condition, that he shall dispose of all as his master wills."

In the Scripture the faithful steward has the promise of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, but here he has absolutely nothing. (Luke 16:10, 12.) In the twinkling of an eye God may take the wealth out of his hand, or he may remove him from his wealth. Even the great potentates of the earth have in their own right absolutely nothing. "The Queen is dead. Long live the King!" is an epitome of the transitory character of power and wealth. "What we call ours to-day, another will be calling his to-morrow." The rich man laid up much goods for many years, and said, "Soul, take thine ease. Eat, drink and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

Mr. Wesley says: "We have this trust reposed

in us only during the short, uncertain space that we sojourn here below. Only so long as we remain on earth, as this fleeting breath is in our nostrils. The hour is swiftly approaching, is just at hand, when we can be no longer stewards. The moment the body 'returns to the dust as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it—we bear the character no more. The time of our stewardship is at an end."

Mr. Wesley continues: "The time when we are to give this account is when the 'great white throne comes down from heaven, and he that sitteth thereon, from whose face the heavens and the earth flee away, and there is found no place for them.' It is when the 'dead, small and great, will stand before God and the book will be opened.' . . . The Lord will next inquire, 'How didst thou employ the worldly goods which I lodged in thy hands? Didst thou use for food, not so as to seek or place thy happiness therein, but so as to preserve the body in health and strength and vigor, a fit instrument for the soul? Didst thou use apparel, not to nourish pride and vanity, much less to tempt others to sin, but conveniently and decently to defend thyself from the injuries of the weather? Didst thou purport to use thy house and all other conveniences with an eye single to my glory in every point, seeking not thine own honor, but mine, studying to please not thyself but me? Once more, in what manner didst thou employ that comprehensive talent money? Not in gratifying the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life? Not squandering it away in vain expenses, the same as throwing it into the sea? Not hoarding it up and leaving it behind thee, the same as burying it in the earth? But first supplying thine own reasonable wants, together with those of thine family, then restoring the remainder to me through Wast thou eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame,

a father to the fatherless, a husband to the widow, and didst thou labor to improve all thy outward works of mercy as a means of saving souls from death?"

The Christian steward is here in training for a larger stewardship hereafter. Our stewardship here will determine our fitness to receive the enduring wealth and the mansions of glory. "He that is faithful over a few things, I will make him ruler over many things."

The Tithe vs. Stewardship A glance at the literature of the day bearing on the question of tithing will reveal the fact that there is a wide difference of opinion concerning the tithe, and its place under the new dispensation. Some writers contend with great positiveness that every Christian is legally bound to give the tenth; others, that those who give the tenth become entangled in a yoke of bondage. Whatever may be our views concerning this matter, may we not all agree that while the Old Testament requires the expenditure of large amounts of money for temple worship which foreshadows and prefigures the coming of Christ, the New Testament requires far greater expenditure, in that it proposes to extend the kingdom of Christ to the ends of the earth? While the offering of the Lamb of God does away with the temple service and its costly sacrifice, it makes a far more urgent claim upon the Christian; and if the Jew, to keep alive his religion in one small land, was commanded by law to give one-tenth to God, and by love to give in addition a free-will offering, it is hard to see how the Christian in the larger liberty of the new dispensation, living in a world of heathen darkness, can do less. It has been well observed that the New Testament demands less from men than the older scripture, but it expects more.

Indeed, we may go a step further, and agree that the *truth* which the Old Testament teaches is eternal, and while the custom of the tithe may be no longer enforced as part of a legal system, it may nevertheless be voluntarily accepted in grateful recognition of the fuller liberty of the Gospel. Certainly the giving of a tenth is not incompatible with stewardship, if in giving a tenth we mean "to designate and segregate a tenth of every man's income as pre-eminently God's tenth, supremely sacred to his service and symbolical of his inherent and real right to all. It is a deed which declares the doctrine that God is owner of heaven and earth, a precept which suggests the principle of other offerings on the same basis as God shall prosper us." The giving of at least a tenth may be regarded as a practical recognition of God's ownership, "an ever-present and impressive object lesson upon the ownership of God and stewardship of man. It necessarily teaches the most scrupulous faithfulness, and while the tithe is but a tenth, it is a symbolic tenth—the tenth that stands for more as we are able to pay it."

The following writers, while differing materially in their opinion concerning the legal character of the tithe, are practically unanimous in agreeing that a Christian steward *cannot do less* than did the Jew under the old dispensation.

"How does our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees if they dare not touch the fruit of the land before they offer the first fruits to the priests and a separate tithe for the Levites? But we do nothing of this, but only so abuse the fruits of the earth that neither priest nor Levite nor altar of God shall see any of them?"—*Origen*.

In commenting on the fact that in the early church men were commanded to give all they had and go and follow Christ, St. Jerome adds: "But if we will not proceed so far, let us at least imitate the Jew's practice and give a part of the

whole to the poor and the honor due the priest and Levite. Whosoever does not, defrauds God, and makes himself liable to a curse."

The following extracts are from contemporaneous writers:

"While, then, I am unable to discover in the Old Testament offerings, regarded as gifts of property to the service of God, any perfect measure of Christian duty in respect to the Gospel, I do find convincing evidence that we ought to give not less than one-tenth of our income to the cause of Christ, and that many of us ought to give far more than this."—*Alvah Hovey, D. D., LL.D.*

"In conclusion let me say I do not think we should substitute form for spirit and rules for principles. We need system, however; and if the Jews, with their restricted opportunities, and 'with the first dawn of spiritual light' gave more than a tenth of the increase for religious purposes, how much ought we believers, who are joint heirs with Jesus Christ, do for him when the whole world is our parish and our Lord's last command is, 'Make disciples of every nation'? Everyone ought to fix on a certain proportion, less than which he will strive not to give. That God fixed the tenth as that proportion for the race in its infancy, all admit. Surely the additional opportunities and graces afforded the Christians of to-day would not point toward a lowering of that standard."—*Rev. S. S. Hough.*

"The Patriarch gave a tenth; and surely the noon of Christianity should not inspire less benevolence than the twilight."—*Rev. F. B. Meyer.*

"The system of tithing, as a system, may be restricted to the Jewish dispensation. It may no longer be enjoined as a positive ordinance of God. But the truth which that system was intended to illustrate and press home upon the hearts of men is eternal. It shines all through the Christian scriptures, clear and luminous, viz.: the universal

ownership of God, made doubly real and emphatic by the purchase of the redemption of Christ. The custom may be no longer enforced as a part of a legal system; the principle will be voluntarily accepted in grateful recognition of the fuller riches of God's grace in the Gospel of his Son."—*Rev. Henry M. King, D. D.*

"Ought the proportion to be any less under the Gospel than under the law? Surely not when we remember that we have as our example one who, 'though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich'; and that we have the precept of this exemplar, which no ingenuity can explain away, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be my disciple.' In the light of such high standards, who can say that at least we ought not to give one-tenth of our income to the Lord?"—*Rev. A. J. Gordon.*

"Under the law they gave one-tenth for God's special service; then a second tenth for another object, and once in three years still another, and a third tenth for something else. Under grace they were expected to be fully as liberal as under the law.—*Rev. William Ashmore, D. D.*

It is not to be expected that one who is now giving a mere pittance will accept a higher and more ideal standard of giving without serious objection. We are told that the tithe is entirely impracticable under the new dispensation, and yet we remember that "the Jews always found it impracticable to pay the tithe in times of spiritual decline, but every difficulty vanished with their return to the fellowship and love of Jehovah."

The only valid ground upon which we may refuse to pay at least a tenth is an honest confession of lack of faith in the promises of Almighty God.

"Those who say the tenth enslaves, need it to show them how it liberates from all debt for

church work and from doubtful ways of raising money. Those who plead their indebtedness need it to teach them honesty with God. Those who plead the world's need as the measure of duty need the tithe to teach them the true doctrine of Divine ownership; and those who urge free-will offering as the Gospel rule, need it to show them that this, divorced from the tithe, is the most impracticable thing in the world, as the present practice of it proves, for in this it is practically no more than a veritable standard for stinginess."

**The
Scriptural
Plan of
Giving**

While no fully outlined plan is laid before us in the New Testament, certain points are clearly set forth.

Giving, if scriptural, must be *systematic*. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store." John MacNeil, of Melbourne, kept a ledger in which page after page of figures was headed by these words, "John MacNeil in account with the Lord Jesus Christ."

Scriptural giving will be *proportionate*. "According to that a man hath." "As God hath prospered him." While the largest liberty is here afforded, and each man is left to judge as to his ability to give, there is no room for looseness. It is to the discredit of the church that the great enterprises of the church, as educational work and the needs of home and foreign missions, have been dependent upon purely accidental causes simply because some systematic and proportionate plan of giving is not followed out. It must displease God when we make our giving depend on the state of the weather or the moving power of the appeal. He is an unfaithful steward who leaves to impulse or accident the amount of his giving. The church has too long depended upon passing the plate among those who happen to be present on a particular Sabbath morning. Often but forty per

cent. of the membership are present when the subject of giving is presented, and plainly some effort must be made to reach the absentees.

Giving should be *devotional*. "Give unto Jehovah the glory due unto his name. Bring an offering and come into his courts." We have noted how in the temple worship the offering to the Lord was one of the chiefest acts of worship. In a very peculiar sense we lay ourselves upon the altar of God when we lay our money there. (See leaflet entitled "Money," by Dr. Schauffler.) It represents us, our labor, our sacrifice, and we glorify God when we offer ourselves thus upon the altar. If giving be indeed worship, the act should be done in a worshipful spirit. As well might one jest when he prays as when he gives. Surely prayer is a more appropriate accompaniment to giving than is the sparkling wit and foolish jest of some so-called money-raisers. The following extract from the Directory of Worship of one of the leading denominations is timely:

"In order that every member of the congregation may be trained to give his substance systematically, and as the Lord hath prospered him, to promote the preaching of the Gospel in all the world and to every creature according to the command of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is proper and very desirable that an opportunity be given for offerings by the congregation in this behalf every Lord's day, and that in accordance with the scriptures the bringing of such offerings be performed as a solemn act of worship to Almighty God. That it may be a separate and specific act of worship, the minister should either precede or immediately follow the same with a brief prayer, invoking the blessing of God upon it, and devoting the offering to his service."

Giving, if Christ-like, will be *sacrificial*. Much of our so-called giving to-day is not giving. The scriptural plan is to give more than is merely con-

venient, or more than the loose change one may happen to have in his pocket. It means more than giving up some luxury of life, more than laying out a convenient plan of living for the year, paying our bills honestly, and giving to the Lord a part of what is left. It is a deep life-plan. It involves the careful and prayerful laying out of expenses at the beginning of the year, and scaling down our general expenses, if need be, that we may give freely to the Lord. It means not alone "giving a tenth, but living on a tenth" if necessary. "Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of thine increase." This means "the first tenth, not the last tenth," the first fruits, not the dregs and leavings.

Giving should be with *gladness* and *singleness of heart*. Giving is not giving in the scriptural sense unless it be prompted by the spirit of love. The Gospel deals with us as a wise parent deals with older children, and we are given large freedom. No compulsion is laid upon us other than that of love, and whatever is done should be done by the free and glad choice of the soul. Dr. A. J. Gordon used to say: "The Lord loveth an hilarious giver."

**How
Promote
Scriptural
Habits of
Giving**

While, as we have seen, the New Testament insures by its teaching the largest liberty in all matters, and in particular in the question of giving, the liberty here set forth does not preclude the application of specific plans to promote given ends. "No successful offering ever came by accident. The reason why some churches always succeed in securing large and representative responses, while others always fail, is easily explained. In the one case there is always wise and intelligent planning and patient and painstaking effort, while in the other things go by default or are left to chance and haphazard."

It is safe to say that scriptural habits of giving will not be generally adopted unless pastors and others who are in places of leadership set forth generally what scriptural habits of giving are. Ordinarily the pastor far better than any one else can determine the method best suited to his particular congregation, and while no general plan can be confidently recommended, the following points have been of service in many places, and they may, therefore, be worthy of trial:

The pastor will occasionally preach on the subject of scriptural habits of giving, and more frequently allude to it in his other sermons. He will by precept and example show the people that this is one of his deepest convictions. He will be powerless unless his own heart is right in the matter, unless he himself practices what he preaches to the people. He will remember that it takes repeated blows to make the iron hot.

The pastor may well at New Year's time send a personal letter of greeting to each member of his congregation, and it would be appropriate on such an occasion to send a little booklet bearing on the subject of Christian Stewardship. In this pastoral letter the pastor can reach *all* the membership, and he can speak plainly and under favorable circumstances. One pastor keeps a record of the birthdays of the children of his congregation, and each birthday sends a letter of greeting. What an opportunity for inculcating golden ideas concerning the true relation of the child to God!

The pastor may wisely distribute literature through the finance or missionary committee of his church, and he may suggest that the committee visit the homes of the members and leave in the homes choice literature. If three or four strong men and women of the church are committed to scriptural habits of giving they can, if tactful, do much to encourage others. The church needs preaching on this subject, but it needs far more the power of personal example.

The church prayer meeting is a strategic point. What men pray for they will, unless hypocritical, work for, and will give for and will sacrifice for. Giving should unquestionably be made a subject for special prayer.

The pastor will doubtless make effective use of the church periodicals in promoting scriptural habits of giving.

Wherever possible the pastor will keep record of the gifts of his congregation from year to year. These records are valuable for comparison and subsequent records. The Old South Church of Boston, which in 1896 gave \$17,154, preserves carefully a list of the names of donors and the amounts given by each for the last fifty years. "From these lists we learn that those who began giving very early kept on giving, increasing the offering from year to year. The names of several of the largest givers to-day are to be found on the list nearly fifty years ago when they commenced giving very small amounts."

While the pastor cannot, as did our Lord, sit over against the treasury and discern the motive, and hence the actual worth of each gift, he can nevertheless analyze the offering, and by comparing the present and past gifts can see just where careful dealing is necessary. If ten men give nine-tenths of the offering, the pastor has food for reflection and a basis for future activity.

The young people's society should by all means bestir itself to promote scriptural habits of giving. It may well hold a public meeting when the idea of Christian stewardship is fully presented. This meeting should be a meeting extraordinary, and should be very carefully worked up. Preparations should be made weeks beforehand. Members should be asked to engage in daily prayer that the meeting may be especially honored of God. A special card may be printed soliciting prayer and inviting attendance. Leaders should be carefully selected and should have placed in their hands

literature bearing on the subject. In this meeting especially let us "attempt great things for God, and expect great things from God."

At the close of the meeting pledges may be taken stating clearly the amount, daily or weekly, each member proposes to give. Dr. Gordon once said: "Human nature cannot be trusted to carry out its generous impulses. If I should succeed in winding any one of you up to the determination to do generous things, you would run down again before next Sunday unless your resolution were fastened by a ratchet. That is what a solemn pledge to pay money to God amounts to, a ratchet to hold us up to the pitch we have reached."

The public meeting may be followed by a personal canvass by a carefully appointed committee, that no one who was not at the meeting may be overlooked, and that those who canvass may find out and correct erroneous impressions that may have been given. It goes without saying that collection of payments should be made regularly and promptly. Whether the envelope plan is adopted, or the mite box, or whatever it may be, a great responsibility is upon the committee to see that the payments are regularly made. Those who are young and are in the formative period of life will not acquire scriptural habits of giving without much help.

The *Sunday school* is a fertile field for the cultivation of scriptural habits of giving. It is easy to form habits in childhood. The princely givers of to-morrow are the children of to-day.

The home is after all the true starting point. Faithful work here will largely solve the problem.

One mission board encourages the use of mite boxes for the family offering and advocates this plan: "Every Lord's day place these mite boxes for each member of the family, and for the guest when present, on the breakfast table. Let the offering be taken before grace is said and in prayer give thanks for God's unspeakable gift.

Thrice a year, Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas, send the money thus accumulated either direct to the board or to the church treasurer for the board.

**The
True
Motive**

And finally it may be stated that those who have anything to do with promoting scriptural habits of giving should always hold before those with whom they come in contact the highest New Testament motive. St. Paul never urged his missionary activity as a reason in itself for the gift. He held before the immature Christians constantly the fact that they were stewards of God's bounty, and as such must give careful account to him. In writing to the Corinthians he asks for money, but bases his appeal on this, "Christ made himself poor that ye might be rich." What a travesty upon the scriptural plan to hold fairs, and bazaars, and oyster suppers, and ice cream festivals, and concerts and lectures, and call this giving unto the Lord! These may have social or educational uses, but money spent for them is not giving. How pitiful that a follower of Jesus Christ should take pride in the fact that his church is doing better than another, or that our pastor should urge his people to give freely lest another church should get ahead of us, or that we should be exhorted to give for the sole reason that we may report our apportionment or assessment raised in full. And what a mistake to feel that we are giving "to the church, or to the pastor, or to the poor, or to the missionaries" when we may have a deep sense that we are actually "giving to the Lord."

When our giving becomes a transaction with Christ the multitudinous demands made upon us will cease to be a cause for annoyance. When in the appeal for help we recognize the appeal of Christ, when in our administration of affairs we

try to be like him, then will our giving be holy, joyous, and well pleasing to him.

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. 8:9.)

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